

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed December 28, 2004 ("*Office Action*"). Claims 1-20 were pending in the Application and stand rejected. The Examiner objects to Claims 3-6, 10-13, and 20 and rejects Claims 1, 2, 7-9, and 14-19. Applicant amends Claims 1, 6, 8, 13, and 15 and cancels Claims 5, 12, 19, and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Consideration of Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant submitted an Information Disclosure Statement dated January 9, 2002. The Examiner has not, however, returned a copy of the PTO-1449 form indicating the Examiner's consideration of all of the cited references. Pursuant to M.P.E.P. § 609, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider all of the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement and, in the event a patent issues on this Application, that these references be printed on the face of the issued patent. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully requests a copy of the PTO-1449 form indicating the Examiner's consideration of the cited references.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claims 3-6, 10-13 and 20 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the timely and favorable consideration of these claims.

In order to hasten issuance of currently allowed subject matter, Applicant amends independent Claims 1, 8, and 15 to each include limitations that the Examiner has indicted as placing the claims in condition for allowance. All other claims depend from these independent claims. Therefore, all claims are in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 2, 7-9, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0215238 to Milton, et al. ("*Milton*"). As discussed above, Applicant amends all of the independent claims to include limitations that the Examiner indicated would place these claims in condition for allowance. These amendments obviate the rejection of the claims. While Applicant believes all independent claims as originally filed to be in condition for allowance in view of the cited art, Applicant amends these claims to hasten issuance of currently allowed subject matter. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the original claims in continuations or other applications without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects Claims 15-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,075,631 to Bala, et al. ("*Bala*"). As discussed above, Applicant amends all of the independent claims to include limitations that the Examiner indicated would place these claims in condition for allowance. These amendments obviate the rejection of the claims. While Applicant believes all independent claims as originally filed to be in condition for allowance in view of the cited art, Applicant amends these claims to hasten issuance of currently allowed subject matter. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the original claims in continuations or other applications without prejudice or disclaimer.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place the Application in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of the Application in any manner, the undersigned Attorney for Applicant stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

No fee is believed to be due. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any extra fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
Attorneys for Applicant

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K=P' followed by a horizontal line.

Kurt M. Pankratz
Reg. No. 46,977

Date: Mar 28, 2005

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